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ABSTRACT

The identification of problems experienced by Nigerian students in American universities could result in improvement of programs to meet the needs of these students. Undergraduate and graduate Nigerian students (N=213) enrolled in Kansas state universities in 1979 completed a modified version of the Michigan International Student Problem Inventory. Students reported problems in seven subscales: most problems were reported in financial aid followed by social-personal, academic records, student activities, living-dining, orientation services, and placement. No problems were reported in admission and selection, English language, health services, or religious services. Several recommendations, based on the findings, are made for both the American and Nigerian governments. (NRB)

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IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY NIGERIAN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITIES

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IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY NIGERIAN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITIES

The problems of Nigerian students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States of America are several. These problems range from finance, social, academic, admission, religious to English language problems. The dilemma posed for colleges and universities in the United States is the identification of the problems experienced by Nigerian students. Such identification may result in the improvement of programs to meet the needs of these students which Connolly (1967), described as confused and characterized by inadequate planning. As of today, only two studies have been reported in literature dealing with certain aspects of problems encountered by Nigerian students in the U.S. Ohuche (1967) conducted a study on the scholastic factors pertaining to the achievements of Nigerian students in the U.S., and Essien (1975) investigated the interaction, perception and attitudes of male Nigerian students toward the United States.

Purpose of the Study: The present study was designed to identify the problems experienced by Nigerian students enrolled in state universities of Kansas during the 1979 - 1980 academic year.

Method

Subjects were all two hundred and sixty-six (266) undergraduate and graduate Nigerian students enrolled in the six state

universities of Kansas during the spring semester of 1979.

Data gathering in this research was facilitated by the use of a modified version of the Michigan International Student Problem Inventory (M.I.S.P.I.) (1972). The inventory was developed to determine the problems of international students in the United States. Since its development, the inventory has been used and modified for similar studies by Breuder(1972) and Hart (1974). The inventory consisted of twelve problem areas listed under eleven major categories, making a total of 132 items. The eleven major problem sub-scales included admission and selection, orientation services, academic records, social-personal, living-dinning, health services and religious services. Other problem sub-scales consisted of English-language, student activities, Financial aids, and placement services. Permission was granted to use and modify the inventory to suit this study by the author.

The inventory or questionnaire method of gathering data was employed in this study because: (1) the students can be garanteed a greater degree of anonymity, (2) it is appropriate in making objective and factual investigation, and (3) the development of numerical measures appears easier. Perkins et. al (1977).

To further establish the reliability, validity and comprehensiveness of the M.I.S.P. inventory, the investigator ran a reliability test based on the coefficient alpha formula.

The reliability estimates were computed for each of the eleven sub-scales. The coefficient estimates ranged from 0.76 for the living and dining sub-scale to 0.90 for the financial aids sub-scale. The results indicated a high degree of firmness of purpose for each of the eleven sub-scales.

Inventories were mailed to all two hundred and sixty-six (266) Nigerian students. A cover letter was included urging respondents to complete the inventory and return it to the investigator within ten (10) days in an enclosed, stamped, addressed envelope. Ten (10) days after the inventories were mailed, one hundred and eighty-three (183) inventories were received. This number accounted for more than sixty-eight per cent (68%) of the questionnaires mailed. Ten (10) envelopes were returned for incorrect addresses. This reduced the Nigerian student population to two hundred and fifty-six (256) and increased the response to about seventy-two per cent (72%). A follow-up letter with another copy of the inventory was mailed to non-respondents. Thirty (30) additional inventories were returned within the time limit of one week. The total return was two-hundred and thirteen inventories (213) which accounted for about eighty-three percent (83.2%) of all Nigerian students enrolled in Kansas universities.

Results

Analysis of the data was based on the use of descriptive statistics (mean) to identify problem areas. Subjects were instructed to respond to the problem items in the inventory by reporting the degree of problem on a four point scale: no problem (1); minor problem (2); moderate problem (3); and major problem (4). Problem areas encountered by Nigerian students were identified by computing a mean scale for each of the sub-scales. The mean score was obtained by dividing the total score for each sub-scale by the number of respondents. (see table 1). The total average score based on the mean scores of the eleven sub-scales was computed to be 1.87. Any sub-scale with mean score greater than 1.87 indicates problem areas experienced by Nigerian students.

A Summary of Problem Areas Reported By Nigerian Students

Table I

Sub-scale	Raw Score	Number of Respondents (N)	Mean Score $\bar{X}$
Financial Aids	537	213	2.52*
Social Personal	436	213	2.05*
Academic Records	419	213	1.97*
Student Activities	414	213	1.94*
Living-Dinning	411	213	1.93*
Orientation Services	409	213	1.88*
Placement	401	213	1.88*

* Mean Scores $>$ (greater than) 1.87, thus indicating problem.

A Summary of No-Problem Areas Reported by Nigerian Students:

Table 2:

Sub-scale	Raw Score	Number of Respondents (N)	Mean Score $\bar{X}$
Admission and Selection	386	213	1.81**
English Language	334	213	1.57**
Health Services	331	212	1.56**
Religious Services	319	212	1.50**

**Mean Scores $\leq$ (less than) 1.87, thus indicating no problem.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrated that Nigerian students enrolled in State Universities of Kansas reported problems in seven of the eleven sub-scales. Respondents identified the most problems on the financial aids sub-scale, with the sub-scale, dealing with social-personal, academic records, student activities, living-dinning, orientation services and placement services following respectively.

This study also identified non-problem areas perceived by the respondents. Nigerian students reported no problems in four of the eleven sub-scales. This include admission and selection, English Language, Health Services, and religious services in descending order.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the investigation, the following recommendations were made:

Exchange control approval dealing with the fees of Nigerian students in the United States should be given top priority by the Nigerian government. Scholarship awards should be increased by the Nigerian government to cover more students.

Prospective students should be made to show evidence of financial support before admissions and visas are granted.

American colleges and universities should provide opportunities to Nigerian students to participate in work-study programs. More Nigerians should be considered for fellowships, grants, loans, and graduate assistantships.

A joint effort by both American and Nigerian governments should be made to provide pre-departure orientation to prospective Nigerian students. The orientation may be conducted at least twice every year and should focus on topics such as the American educational system, culture, and difficulties experienced by Nigerian students currently studying in the U.S.

Finally, Kansas colleges and universities should no longer request prospective Nigerian students to take the examination - test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL).

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